



## Family Ties

### Lesson Plan

#### Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to create a family tree to help them identify family strengths and challenges.
2. Participants will learn strategies to create an effective parenting team.
3. Participants will talk together about goals for nurturing family relationships.
4. Participants will learn how children are affected by how they deal with family relationships.
5. Participants will commit to using learned strategies to strengthen family relationships.
6. Participants will access community resources when they are presented with complex family relationship challenges.

#### Materials:

- DVD – *Everybody Loves Raymond*, Season 1, Disc 5, Episode 22, “Why Are We Here?” (1:10-3:58).
- DVD player and television or a computer with a DVD drive and a projector
- Participant binder pockets with handouts:
  - How Do You Define Family? worksheet
  - My Family Tree of Support worksheet – one per participant
  - Thinking About My Family worksheet – one per participant
  - Your Parenting Team handout
  - *Co-Parenting, Whether You Live Together or Apart* booklet
  - Stepfamilies: True or False (for optional activity; see Preparation note below)
  - Setting Goals for Family Relationships worksheet
  - Resource list for your area (see Preparation note #1)
- MU Extension Guidesheet (have available for participants, if interested)
  - *Promoting Family Strengths*, GH 6640
- SPEAK/HEAR skills card
- Flip chart, overhead projector, or chalk board, etc.
- Pencils and markers for family tree activity
- Pens
- Attendance sheet
- Name tags
  - Materials for participant tables:
  - Play dough
  - Pipe cleaners
  - Paper and markers, etc.
- Participant incentives

### Session Overview:

---

<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	(10-15 minutes)
<b>Watch video clip and discuss</b>	(8 minutes)
<b>Activity: Family tree</b>	(15 minutes)
<b>Discussion: The influence of family relationships</b>	(10 minutes)
<b>Discussion: The influence of ex-partners</b>	(5 minutes)
<b>Activity: Thinking about my family</b>	(10 minutes)
<b>Discussion: Parenting teams</b>	(20-23 minutes)
<b>Optional Discussion and Activity</b>	(8-10 minutes)
<b>Stepfamilies discussion</b>	
<b>True/False activity: Stepfamilies</b>	
<b>Talking about it: Goals for nurturing family relationships</b>	(5-7 minutes)
<b>Resources in the community</b>	(5 minutes)
<b>Introduce take home activity</b>	(1 minute)
<b>Wrap-Up</b>	(10 minutes)

---

<i>Session total</i>	<i>(2 hours)</i>
----------------------	------------------

#### Preparation:

1. Create a list of resources for your area to include in participant packets.
2. During this session, participants will work to create a family tree of support. Make copies of the family tree picture for participants to use during this activity. You may want to create a sample for participants.
3. This lesson includes an optional discussion and activity about stepfamilies which you may wish to use if it relates to your participants.
4. To print copies or to order the MU Extension Guidesheet (*Promoting Family Strengths*, GH 6640), visit the MU Extension website at <http://extension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/>
5. To order the *Co-Parenting Whether You Live Together or Apart* booklet, contact Prevent Child Abuse America Fulfillment Center, One Community Place, South Deerfield, MA 01373 or call 1-800-835-2671.

**Procedure:****1. Welcome participants to the session and reconnect (10-15 minutes).**

---

- Introduce yourself to the group and to the title of today's lesson, "Family Ties."
- Welcome participants to the session and, especially if you have new participants, go around the room and have everyone briefly introduce themselves.
- Ask about the take home activity from the previous session (if applicable).

**🗨️ Say:** *"Today we are going to talk about strengthening relationships with the people in your life."*

- Have participants take out the "How Do You Define Family?" worksheet from their packets and write down their definition of family.

**Ask:** *"What is a family?" "Who is in your family?"*

**🗨️ Say:** *"As you can see, we all have different types of families. That's what makes families complex."*

- Expand on participant responses.

**2. Watch video clip and discuss (8 minutes).**

---

- Before you play the clip, ask participants to think about how the family members interact.
- Show a clip from the *Everybody Loves Raymond* episode titled, "Why Are We Here?," Season 1, Disc 2, Episode 22, (1:10-3:58).

**Ask:** *"Does this look like your family in any way?" "What are the strengths of having families close by?" "What are some challenges of having family close by?"*

**🗨️ Say:** *"This program is all about helping develop healthy relationships so that your child will grow up in a healthy, positive, and safe environment. All of your relationships influence your child. These could be relationships with your child's other parent, ex-partners, in-laws, or other family members. The thing to remember is that it's important to work with the people in your support system. No matter what problems you have outside of your immediate*

*family, chances are, if you have healthy, supportive relationships, it can lessen the burden.”*

### 3. Activity: Family tree (15 minutes).

---

- Have participants get out the “Family Tree” handout in their packets.
- **Say:** *“Think about your family relationships. Who is a source of support for you? Who might present more of a challenge for you and your family? This tree represents you and your family relationships. Label the tree with family members, friends, and other people that have an influence on your life. You can use words, pictures, symbols, or whatever you choose to represent these different relationships.*

*For **relationships that are a great support for you**, you might want to write or draw pictures to represent those people and place them in the roots, or the foundation, of the tree. This could show how these people help you have a firm foundation, give you support, and keep you strong.*

***Relationships that influence your life but are not a great source of support** might be included further out on your family tree, possibly on a branch or somewhere away from the tree, depending on how close those relationships are to you. Be as creative as you want with this. Include as many of the relationships in your life that influence you as you can and as many as you are comfortable with.”*

- Give participants about 10 minutes to work on their family trees.

### 4. Discussion: The influence of family relationships (10 minutes).

---

- Discuss how the relationships represented in the family tree influence their family. Here are some questions to guide your discussion:

**Ask:** *“How did you decide where to put the different relationships on your family tree?” “If you drew this family tree a year ago, how might it look different?” “How would this family tree have looked 5 years ago?” “What do you hope it looks like a few years from now?”*

### 5. Discussion: The influence of ex-partners (5 minutes).

---

**Ask:** *“How can ex-partners, more specifically an ex-partner who is your child’s other parent, be a source of support for you?” “What are some different ways that ex-partners can create challenges for you?”*

**Say:** *“As you probably know, ex-partners influence your current relationships. When these relationships are either very negative or very positive, this can have a negative influence on your current relationship and on your children.”*

## 6. Activity: Thinking about my family (10 minutes).

---

- Have participants complete the “Thinking About My Family” worksheet on their own, then have them share with a partner.
- Ask singles to think about their families growing up and how they want their family to be. After they are finished, have them pair up with another participant to share about their families.
- For couples, have each person fill out the worksheet on their own, then share with their partners.
- Discuss the activity with the entire group.

**Ask:** *“What did you say is the best thing about your family?”*

## 7. Introduce parenting teams (5-8 minutes).

---

**Ask:** *“How do you think family relationships affect your parenting?”*

**Say:** *“Your family relationships can have an effect on your parenting, especially if they are a part of your parenting team.”*

**Ask:** *“What does ‘Parenting Team’ mean to you?”*

**Say:** *“Your parenting team includes you and any other adults who help care for and raise your child. This might include your child’s other parent, your parents or grandparents, a sibling, a friend or neighbor, and anyone else who has a role in raising your child.”*

**Ask:** *“What happens when members of your parenting team don’t agree about parenting issues?”*

**Say:** *“When parents, and other parenting team members, are not supportive of one another and put each other down or fight*

*about parenting, children suffer. Having a supportive parenting team sets a good example for children and helps them feel safe and loved. Just as the environment of a tree can affect how it grows and develops (as we saw with our Family Support trees), the environment of a supportive parenting team affects how your child grows and develops.”*

#### **8. Discussion: Parenting teams (15 minutes).**

---

- Briefly go through the “Co-Parenting Whether You Live Together or Apart” booklet, highlighting the main sections.
- Read through the “Your Parenting Team” handout.

**Ask:** *“Do you think these things describe your current parenting team? Why or why not?”*

#### **9. Optional Discussion and Activity: Stepfamilies (8-10 minutes).**

---

- Have participants discuss how living in a stepfamily affects children.

**Ask:** *“Was anyone raised in a stepfamily?”*

For those that respond “yes,” ask:

*“How did it feel to grow up in a stepfamily?” “What type of relationship did you have with your stepparents?” “Was it the kind of relationship that you wanted to have with your stepparent?”*

- Have participants think about how the children in their stepfamily might feel.
- Emphasize that children learn by watching, so their future relationships will be influenced by what they see and experience while growing up.

#### **10. Optional Activity: True/False Activity: Stepfamilies**

---

- Use this activity if you have several participants with stepfamilies.
- Assign one side of the room as true and the other as false.
- Have participants move to the side of the room that best fits how they feel about each statement.
- Have a few participants share why they think each statement is either true or false.
- See the “Stepfamilies: True or False” handout.

#### **11. Talking about it: Goals for nurturing family relationships (5-7 minutes).**

---

- Have participants work in groups of 2 or 3 to talk about what they learned from this session and how they plan to use the information in the future.
- Have participants complete the “Setting Goals for Family Relationships” worksheet as they talk about their goals for nurturing family relationships and creating a positive, healthy parenting team.
- Distribute SPEAK/HEAR skills cards. Some participants may be familiar with these skills from attending a previous session. However, the skills may be new to some participants.
- Briefly read through the skills listed on the SPEAK/HEAR skills card, and then allow participants time to talk.

### **12. Resources in the community** (5 minutes).

---

- Present resources in your community to participants.
- Refer participants to NCSU extension “Just in Time Parenting” for more support and information when it comes to family relationships and other parenting concerns.

### **13. Introduce the take home activity** (1 minute).

---

 **Say:** *“Think about the goals you made for nurturing your family relationships and for creating a positive, healthy parenting team.”*

### **14. Wrap up the session and give out incentives** (10 minutes).

---

- Ask if anyone has any general questions.
- Tell participants that they can call ParentLink’s WarmLine (1-800-552-8522) for questions about tonight’s lesson, problem-solving support, and for community resources.
- Thank participants for coming and participating in the lesson.
- Make sure everyone knows the day and location of the next session.

This lesson was possible thanks to a grant from ACF